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Productivism, Culture and the Challenges of Sustainable Beef Production in Australia *

호주 쇠고기 산업의 생산주의, 문화, 그리고 지속가능성

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한국은 상당량의 호주산 쇠고기를 수입하고 있으며, 국내 소비자들은 대체로 호주산 쇠고기를 신뢰한다. 한국 소비자들은 호주에서 쇠고기가 어떻게 생산되는지에 대해 정확히 알지 못하지만, 호주 쇠고기는 깨끗하고, 친환경적이라고 생각한다. 이는 부분적으로는 호주 축산공사의 적극적인 홍보 때문이다. 한국인들은 호주에서는 소들이 영양 많고, 오염되지 않은 초원에서 친환경적으로 사육된다고 생각하는 경향이 있다. 그리고 이런 생각이 호주산 쇠고기에 대한 소비자들의 신뢰에 기여한다. 이 논문은 국내 소비자들의 당연한 기대와는 달리 호주 쇠고기 산업이 생산주의에 크게 기대고 있다는 점을 보여준다. 생산주의는 종종 환경적 지속가능성을 희생하면서까지 이윤을 극대화하고, 시장 경쟁력을 높이도록 한다. 호주 쇠고기 산업 전체를 놓고 보면, 사육농가, 비육장, 축산공사, 소비자 환경단체 등 다양한 행위자들이 지속가능성에 대한 상이한 시각을 가지고 있다. 이 연구는 퀸즈랜드 중부 지역의 사육농민들과의 심층면접을 통해, 호주 쇠고기 산업의 자연자원에

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** 교신저자

대한 관리는 문화적 규범과 전지구적 정치경제의 상호작용에 의해 추동된다는 것을 보여준다. 많은 사람들이 축산업의 환경적 지속가능성에 대해 비판적임에도 불구하고 생산농가들은 지속가능성을 경제적 지속성과 동일시한다. 생산주의 문화가 생산자들에게 깊이 뿌리내리고 있는 것이다. 연구 결과 호주 쇠고기 생산이 자연환경에 위해를 가한다는 데 동의하는 쇠고기 생산농민은 거의 없었다. 비록 환경주의자들과 일부 소비자들의 '외부'로부터의 문제 제기에도 불구하고 생산농가 '내부'로부터의 자기 방어, 즉 자신들의 쇠고기 생산방식은 지속가능하다는 믿음은 대단히 견실한 것으로 나타났다.

주제어: 호주 쇠고기, 청정우, 호주 축산농가, 생산주의, 축산문화, 지속가능성

It is not only about [the soil] being bare, but it is a matter of the country being …well… if I was talking amongst my gentlemen friends, I would say it is being raped over the years … consistently, eh? (Cec, retired grazier)

Introduction

Beef has become an important part of the South Korean diet. Rapid modernization and economic development since the 1960s has led to an increase in meat consumption, especially beef. Indeed, per capita beef consumption per year increased from 0.5kg in 1960 to 8.8kg in 2010, representing an 18-fold increase. The increasing demand for beef in Korea has been met by the development of intensive domestic meat production systems, along with a sharp increase in imports from meat exporting countries, most importantly Australia and the US.

This importation of meat represents a shift in Korean meat

consumption patterns. Until the late 1970s, the Korean domestic beef sector was protected in order to support small-scale, local producers. However, as Korea became increasingly integrated into the global economy from the 1980s onwards, the Korean beef market was gradually opened up and then fully liberalized by 2001. By 2009, the total supply of beef in Korea was about 475,900 tons, among which 222,800 tons were imported - representing approximately 47% of all beef consumed in Korea (KREI, 2010).

From which countries is this foreign beef imported? In the early 2000s, the US was the main supplier of beef to Korean consumers. In 2003, Korea imported 224,000 tons of beef from the US, equivalent to 69% of total beef import to Korea. However, the Korean government banned US beef in 2004 on food safety grounds, as there was a reported case of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), commonly known as mad-cow disease, in North America. As a result, Australia became the major supplier of beef to the Korean market with its market share reaching some 70% in 2007. Australian beef does not compete directly with the Korean product 'Hanwoo' beef. Australian beef is leaner, cheaper and it is marketed for everyday consumption (NFF, 2012: 11). Australian beef is in competition with US beef and there are fears, in Australia, that the Korea-US Free Trade Agreement will cut Australian exports to Korea considerably, at the same time as US products sell in greater quantities (NFF, 2012: 9). In mid-2008, surrounded with controversy, US beef re-entered the Korean market as Korea-US 'beef talks' had been resolved by Presidents Lee Myung-bak and George W. Bush, who saw US beef importation to Korea as an important condition for facilitating the US-Korea Free Trade Agreement. This decision was strongly resisted by the Korean

people, most visible in the 100-day candlelight vigil against the importation of US beef (Kim and Kim, 2009; Kim and Lee, 2009). Many Koreans are still reluctant to purchase US beef, especially for home cooking, due to food safety concerns following the highly-publicised link to mad-cow disease. Hence, the share of Australian beef remains significant at more than 50% of total imported beef. In 2010, Australia exported 124,000 tons of beef to Korea, which was a 7% increase from the previous year (CCA, 2011: 16). While Australian beef is relatively more expensive than US beef, Korean consumers prefer Australian beef because it is reasonably priced and is accompanied by 'clean and green' credence claims (Hur, 2010; Jeong, 2005).

Through the meat marketing board, Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA), Australia has sought to present its beef as a 'clean and green' product for health-conscious Koreans. With increasing concern about food safety and health, 'clean and green' beef has provided Australia with a new marketing opportunity.[1] As early as 2002, the MLA recognized this market advantage by labeling the Australian beef Hoju Chungjung Woo (Australian clean/green beef). The MLA describes Chungjung Woo as beef that is produced "in a clean Australian natural environment and thorough and fastidious quality control" (MLA, 2012). For the MLA 'clean' relates to food safety, while 'green' covers environmental and welfare issues (Sanchez, 2010: 141). While Korean consumers tend to believe that Australian beef is clean and green, they do not seem to have a solid grounding for their belief. According to a national survey in 2011, only 10.4%

1) For an excellent discussion on Australia's strategy to promote a 'clean and green' image overseas and to sell 'pure Australian food,' see Chang and Kristiansen (2004).

of 1,400 respondents said they knew anything about the Australian beef production system (Kim et al., 2011). It seems Australian beef as clean and green is, at least for Korean consumers, an image that they have acquired through various advertisements in the media, which often shows a herd of cattle grazing peacefully in a large, open, paddock. Most consumers do not go far enough to question whether the Australian beef production is genuinely green or not; rather, they would take the image for granted and use it in choosing safe beef for themselves in the market.

Even more surprising than Korean consumers' lack of knowledge of, or interest in, Australian beef production is the dearth of academic research on the Australian beef industry by Korean scholars. While Australian beef has become an important social phenomenon, very little research has been undertaken. Research that has explored beef production and consumption has largely been from an economic perspective (Hur, 2010; Jeong, 2005). These issues are pertinent for South Korea as, within Australia, there has been growing concern by consumers and green groups requesting more environmentally-sustainable agricultural production systems. Yet, evidence suggests the neoliberal political economy of Australian agriculture, coupled with cultural values relating to beef production, locks producers into a 'productivist' format which is not environmentally benign (see Gray and Lawrence, 2001).

The debates about the 'clean and green' credentials of beef within Australia have largely been on the grounds of health impacts, ethical diets, safety and environmental impacts of both grass and grain-fed cattle (the latter are those 'finished' in feedlots). In terms of food safety, while Australia has not experienced significant food scares

such as BSE, there has been some discussion about the use of growth promotant hormones. Korea, the European Union and Japan will not accept beef that is produced with added hormones, however, Australia's domestic supply is not centrally regulated in this regard. However, Australia's two major supermarket chains - which have considerable power in the supply chain (see Burch and Lawrence, 2007) - recently intervened with private quality standards that reduced market access for those producing beef with added hormones. The supermarkets claimed they were responding to consumer demands in eliminating 'added-hormone' beef from their stores, whilst others claimed the Australia public was not aware that hormones were used to produce beef (Greenwood, 2011). At the environmental level, there is broad concern from government, NGOs and civil society about managing the impacts of grazing on the Australian landscape, as is outlined below.

In this paper, we show how the Australian beef industry is heavily influenced by productivism which emphasizes economies of scale and market competitiveness, often at the expense of environmental sustainability. In this sense, any claims to Australian beef being 'green' (that is being grown in an environmentally-friendly manner) can be questioned. In this paper we will examine the environmental attitudes and values of a group of Australian beef producers in Central Queensland – one of the nation's primary beef production regions. It covers 142,500 km^2 and the climate is sub-tropical to semi-arid with a generally low (largely summer) rainfall. The weather is characterized by extended dry periods followed by heavy rainfall events and floods in parts. In-depth interviews were undertaken with 50 beef producers across 26 properties during the study

(2003-2007).[2] The following section outlines the dominant mode of growing beef in Australia – productivism – as this has direct relevance to environmental sustainability, or the so-called 'green' credentials of Australian beef.

Productivism and the Environment

Productivism is a mode of farm production that relies upon the use of the latest products of agribusiness to secure productivity boosts and, along with specialization of production, to gain comparative advantage on global markets. It is a production-form that is employed by both farmers (who grow crops) and graziers (who graze animals). Whilst grazing in Australia can be described as extensive (pasture-based), rather than intensive (feedlot-based) – with only 2% of the national herd being held on a feedlot at any one time (Australian Lot Feeders Association, 2012) - the productivist format of beef production involves economies of scale, and the prioritisation of commodity outputs over other, non-tradable, concerns such as the preservation of the environment or sustainable rural livelihoods (Cary, Webb and Barr, 2002; Lawrence, Herbert-Cheshire and Richards, 2004; Richards and Lawrence, 2009).

One reason for the dominance of the productivist paradigm is that commercial producers operate within a market-based agricultural economy – one requiring of them the combination of labour, capital and knowledge in a manner that maximises returns. The pressure

2) Among these producers, the comments of nine were used in this paper. For the social background of these interviewees, refer to the Appendix.

has been intensified as Australian beef producers increasingly rely on foreign markets for their survival, competing with countries like Brazil and the US. Australia exported 64% of beef produced in 2010, valued approximately 5 billion dollars, mostly to Japan, the US, and Korea (CCA, 2011: 16). Graziers have to assess how to make a sustained profit under conditions of market and climate fluctuation. Given the unpredictable nature of grazing, most will attempt to increase efficiency of production and productivity by utilising the latest technologies (where possible) and by maximising the output from existing resources (see Lawrence, Richards and Cheshire, 2004).

The productivist culture – in concert with an entrenched 'agrarianism' (an ideology celebrating the importance of farming, see Gray and Lawrence, 2001) - produces a world-view that is underpinned by the following assumptions:

- Farming is a competitive business and to succeed one must become more competitive
- Becoming more competitive means using the 'latest' products/methods that boost productivity
- Although the costs of farm inputs are increasing, there is little choice but to use these new technologies
- Farmers in such a competitive environment are hampered by government regulations
- People in the cities do not understand the pressures on farming, or the ways of farming
- Producers are managing natural resources as best they can – given the constraints they face
- If environmental problems occur they will be solved through the application of new agribusiness technologies – such as biotechnology: science will, as always, come to the rescue.

There is much evidence to link productivist-style beef production with environmental problems (see McAlpine et al., 2009). Following the colonization of Australia in 1788, the introduction of cattle required the deforestation of vast tracts of land. Tree clearing has been a controversial issue, with large-scale forest destruction occurring in Queensland, the site of the study, well into the mid-2000s (many States now restrict mass tree clearing). However, according to Bush Heritage (2012) Australia is still clearing trees more quickly than they can be regenerated. Experts have argued that tree clearing has caused water tables to rise, consequently pushing salts to the surface layers of the soil and destroying the vegetation that remains (for example see NR&M, 2005). This salinization of soil currently affects 6 million hectares of land in Australia, but this is anticipated to reach 17 million hectares by 2050 (Bush Heritage, 2012).

Another consequence of removing trees and native pastures is habitat loss for native birds and mammals. It is estimated that over 5 million land birds are lost each year, and many mammal species, including some wombats, wallabies and bandicoots, are nearing extinction due to land clearing (Bush Heritage, 2012). Indeed, it is claimed that Australia has lost more plants and mammals to extinction as a result of land clearing and habitat loss than 98 per cent of the world's countries. Whilst not all clearing can be attributed to cattle grazing, pastoral activities (for sheep and cattle) account for 57% of Australia's land area (Bureau of Rural Science, 2012). Producing beef for export has been important economically for the Australian economy generally, and for rural industries in particular. Yet, the hazards of mass vegetation clearing accrue as an externality of the industry at a global level. For instance, land clearing contributed

13 per cent of Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions during 1996. The economic cost for this contribution to greenhouse gas emissions has been estimated at $1.6 billion annually (Bush Heritage, 2012).

The overgrazing of pastoral lands is often flagged as an environmental impact of the beef industry (Australian Natural Resources Atlas, 2009). Overgrazing occurs when the ground cover is depleted by grazing animals, resulting in the exposure of top soil. This has been implicated in vegetation loss, subsequently increasing the vulnerability of Australia's already-thin soils to erosion and leading to weed infestations. With extreme weather events such as floods and storms, exposed top soil is washed or blown away, removing soil nutrients and promoting the desertification of land (Goldie et al., 2005).

It is not culture, alone, that perpetuates productivism. Government policy settings are geared to ensure that productivity increases in agriculture continue indefinitely and so contribute to Australia's international market competitiveness. Governments do not intervene to 'force' producers to adopt more beneficial technologies or management regimes: it is the responsibility of individual producers to innovate and to be 'self-reliant' in operating their farms (Productivity Commission, 2009). In some cases, interventions that have occurred – such as the provision of drought relief – have been implicated in promoting poor farming behavior. Drought assistance has been given to producers who have failed to plan for and manage the risks of drought, thereby supporting those who have kept high stocking rates in the face of climatic signals that de-stocking was necessary. That is, drought payments (government interventions)

have perpetuated the sort of farming that has led to overgrazing and subsequent resource degradation (Productivity Commission, 2009).

Despite the evidence linking the productivist format of cattle grazing with environmental degradation, there is a strong counter discourse that denies any environmental impact. Insights can be gained into the dominant framings of beef production and environmental sustainability by applying the theoretical applications of culture and discourse to examine how current practices are rationalized under the neoliberal political-economic ideology that drives Australian production.

Culture, Discourses and Discursive Resources

An understanding of the complexities of social practices and why different groups, such as graziers and urban consumers, subscribe to different values and belief systems benefits from the application of cultural theory and, in particular, an analysis of discourses. Culture is a concept that has many manifestations and applications. In this study, culture is used as a theoretical and analytical framework which seeks to account for how social order is communicated, experienced, interpreted, explored, contested and reproduced (see Williams, 1981). This allows an insight into how different groups set their agendas and mobilise discursive resources to support their standpoint on particular issues. In an interpretive sense, culture provides the social framework, or context, for 'meaning-making'. Culture can be thought of as the shared understanding among particular groups and also

as set of identities, things, practices, knowledge systems, values, and beliefs that also highlight differences between groups. It is these cultural attributes that form key distinguishing features between groups. It helps us to understand the different orientations of rural producers and urban dwellers.

The qualitative data that were generated from interviews with Central Queensland graziers revealed only a small variation in the types of beliefs about the environment and pastoral production. In listening to graziers, and subsequently analysing the data, a set of commonly-held viewpoints and a commonality in the way these beliefs were articulated was apparent. Discourses represent a logical level of analysis as they capture the dominant beliefs in a given space and time, but also reveal the cultural embeddedness of such beliefs (Hajer, 1995).

As productivist modes of agriculture and pastoralism are often viewed as being incompatible with environmental protection (see Buttel, 1998; Schnaiberg, 1980), it is worth delving deeper and examining the characteristics of key discourses and the discursive resources deployed by graziers to justify productivism as the preferable mode of operation. It is important to recognise that social and cultural aspects of human practice are embedded within cultural settings. Culture accounts for both change and consistency (Jenks, 2005) and has particular efficacy in explaining how changing visions about more sustainable food production can be accompanied by fixed practices in relation to sustainability in pastoral and agricultural sectors.

Very different cultural fields have informed, and in turn have been informed by, the lived experiences and practices of these two distinct

groups, urban consumers and rural producers. By field, Bourdieu refers to '…a social arena within which struggles or manoeuvres take place over specific resources or stakes and access to them' (Jenkins, 2002: 84). Not all fields are equally accessible to everyone (Swartz, 1997). In a spatial sense, these social arenas can be defined – for the purposes of this paper - as urban and rural spaces. This is not to over-emphasise the impact of membership of these fields, but to identify the distinctions between such fields while recognising and appreciating that these boundaries are blurred, contested and often overlap. More broadly, these arenas include less-concrete concepts such as intellectual distinction, class, power, prestige and life-styles. At the global level, the political economy and subsequent terms-of-trade experienced by producers, as described earlier in this paper, also constitutes a field within which practice occurs. However, if the political economy field were wholly constraining to all producers, then presumably there would be little evidence of any producers shifting to alternative, biodynamic forms of agricultural and pastoral production. The fact that some graziers have been able to adapt to new environment imperatives, within the same political economy and geographical location, suggests that culture and particularly cultural reproduction are of sociological significance.

Intrinsically linked to these social arenas, or fields, is Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Habitus describes a set of dispositions and logic of practice whereby actors are strategic improvisers who are not merely following rules or norms as suggested in many structural accounts of social action (Swartz, 1997). Habitus is formed as a result of social conditioning - which produces a set of durable and transposable dispositions which organise and generate practices and

representations that can be objectively adapted to their preferred outcomes (Bourdieu, 1990: 53). Habitus is not a blind following of the predominant social structure, but a socialisation whereby external structures, which are common to actors of a class or status group, are internalised providing broad parameters for social action or practice (Swartz, 1997: 103-104). Individual action is, therefore, shaped in a way that reinforces, perpetuates and reproduces key structures. Crucial to this study is the understanding that habitus is constituted collectively: those who share similar life chances and life experiences share the same habitus. Equally pertinent to this study is the proposition that habitus is resistant to change – adaptation is possible but the process is said to be slow and often unconscious (Swartz, 1997). Arguably, habitus also provides the setting for integration and social cohesion within fields and potentially creates a source of tension between different fields. In essence, this explains one basis of power and conflict between groups.

Importantly, it has been argued that producers who attempt to break away from the productivist paradigm and its associated environment problems – to operate their properties along different lines and/or to reject 'scientific' agriculture - are often subject to the scrutiny and sanctioning of others (Conacher and Conacher, 1995; Guerin and Guerin, 1994; Richards et al., 2005). Despite this, some producers have begun to question the productivist approach and have embraced new production methods. They can be, and have been, ostracized by graziers who see them confronting the current productivist mode of operation (Richards and Lawrence, 2009).

Hegemony, Resistance and Stasis

The following section examines responses of graziers to questions about their production decisions in the face of environmental and other concerns. It highlights how values relating to productivism, embedded in the collective habitus of graziers, are cast as social truths and defended as the 'only way' to conduct pastoral activities. During the interview sessions, graziers were asked, 'what does sustainability mean to you?' and 'is there an environmental problem in this area?'. This was the first point where many graziers contested the need for a shift to 'greener' production by mobilising their own discursive resources. This included questioning the existence and the extent of environmental problems, questioning the motives behind the environmental movement, and identifying a rural culture that it not knowable or understandable to those outside. In discussing the meaning of sustainability, Max, a grazier/farmer stated

> Like, ah, well, basically, for as long as that sun keeps shining you can keep producing off this land…if it is not profitable, it is not sustainable.

A female grazier, Felicity, offered a similar explanation when asked about the meaning of sustainability. She answered, that sustainability is

> …to turn off the same number of head this time and as in a hundred years.

These viewpoints, which were common in the study, equate sustainability with the productive capacity of the land. Here, the land's capacity to produce food beef - and, therefore, profit - is viewed as an indicator of environmental

sustainability. A counter-argument could challenge whether profitability is a useful indicator of environmental robustness. After all, profitability can often be achieved at the expense of the environment via overstocking and short-term resource exploitation (Richards et al., 2005). Producers deny resource exploitation: indeed, the very existence of environmental problems is sometimes contested. For example, Ted believes that the experts

> … talk rubbish about greenhouse and all that, that's just a red herring, there's nothing in fact that the world's heating up – it is a load of rubbish, and they say you've got to save the trees, but if you take a tree away and grow grass, it's going to take more of your carbons, isn't it?

Another key indicator that revealed the existence of a productivist discourse became evident when landholders spoke about getting rid of 'rubbish country', or about having a 'dirty paddock'. When asked about the meaning of these terms, landholders explained it was land that was vegetated with native acacia trees, the Brigalow. The common approach to pastoral management is to clear Brigalow to facilitate the growth of pastures. However, Brigalow as an ecosystem and wildlife habitat is now reportedly under threat with recorded extinctions of the Paradise Parrot, White-footed Rabbit-rat, Brush-tailed Bettong and the Darling Downs Hopping-mouse (Environment Australia, 2005). The following quote highlights how one conservation-orientated grazier, Greg, interprets the meanings of such discourses within the broader grazing community.

> *Researcher*: People talk about rubbish country and scrub…
> *Greg*: They are only talking about it in terms of productivity - not environmental values.
> *Researcher*: Yes, they are telling me that with Brigalow, there is nothing that lives

> in it anyway, is that…
> *Greg*: Yes, look, I used to think that and I have changed ...that [conservation meeting] that I told you about….one bloke there said "….look, er, Brigalow is just rubbish anyway, he kept saying the whole area wouldn't run one bandicoot.[3] He is talking about productivity. Since I have been involved in environmental issues, I have changed, I have realized that everything is sort of integrated, whether it is soil microbes or borers eating old timber or whether it is animals breeding in hollow logs, Brigalow is just a hive of activity environmentally, it's rich. But you will get laughed at if you say those kinds of things. Because they go through it one day and see one miserable bandicoot and they say that is all it is good for. They don't think about the whole scheme of things. That will take generations to change, that one.

Aside from the differing constructions of sustainability, and the contestation of an environmental problem, many landholders also draw attention to the different cultural fields that are construed as the source of conflict over environmental management. As Athol, an older farmer/grazier notes

> … so many of our problems in the rural world actually have been caused by politics - and politics only reflects what people vote, politicians only reflect the average person. Now the average person (lives) in the city which is where most of the voting power (lies)….

Here, Athol is suggesting that urban voters must be held accountable for problems that are now being manifested in rural areas. Likewise, the questionable practices of urban dwellers are also identified as part of the environmental problem. Lee noted the following:

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3) A small native marsupial

> At the moment you see them up here, the tourist industry going fine, every boat load of tourists going to the [Great Barrier] reef, as soon as they see a bit of dead coral they blame all the cane farmers for that. They don't blame all the people in town who are probably spraying insecticides and everything, fertiliser on their lawn. It's all getting washed out… Oh, but they're alright.

Others also felt that they had been misunderstood by people living in urban areas, not only on the basis of locality, but through a perception that the two groups often had little understanding of each others' dispositions and social contexts (that is, in Bourdieu's terms, habitus and fields). Leo, who was also active in agricultural politics, felt that

> one of our problems today is there is a big gap between city and the bush and knowledge from the city about what is going on - and there all these innuendos and remarks made from people in the city who don't understand.

Felicity also challenged the notion of tree clearing by pointing to the lack of knowledge of environmentalists:

> I just wish the Greenies would come in and listen you know, there's far more trees in all of this country now than there ever was….

Later in the interview, Felicity's husband, Ben, concurred with her view and vented his frustrations about what he called 'radical conservationists'. He said:

> I'm used to always be crossing swords with them [city-based conservationists] because they were very unpractical what their ideas were, and I considered that mine were, you know, reasonably practical seeing's they'd come from experience

> … I kept on saying to them, don't come out and annoy us, fix up your cities first because they're just a bloody mess of total degradation. There's no conservation at all in the city… but it seems they're still expanding.

Such 'speech acts' condemn those who are perceived to be the more powerful group by identifying inequality and questioning particular knowledge, actions and motives of the perceived dominant group. Van Dijk (1993) identifies such discursive strategies as counter-power which sets out to undermine the dominance of one group over another.

Other discursive tools evident in the data relate to those of legitimacy surrounding the notion of property rights. Again, elements of this speech deal with power and counter-power about who has legitimate authority over the way the land is managed. During fieldwork, graziers were concerned about new legislation that prevented broadscale tree clearing. For instance, Lee argued:

> Well, in our case, we have freehold land, and when we paid for freehold we paid for what trees are growing here as well. We bought those trees. Now they're saying what we can do and what we can't do with them.

In Central Queensland, an earlier land development program, known as the Brigalow Scheme, allocated land based on the statutory requirement that the trees (the Brigalow) would be cleared from fence-to-fence. This 'taming' of the land was strongly symbolic and foundational in cementing a set of mythologies around concepts of nation building and the quintessential Australian pioneering spirit (Gill, 2005). Hence, any perceived decline in pastoral hegemony, or challenges to current practices from the non-pastoralist sector, is felt deeply by landholders, who - as it has been shown - draw upon discursive strategies to deny the existence of a problem, to deflect

criticism and resist the truth-claims of others by questioning their morality and legitimacy.

These comments, while offering insights into production, need to be understood and interpreted within a broader context of a culture of consumerism. Consumerism is the continual pursuit, purchase and possession of goods and services that reinforce status and identity in the modern world (Smart, 2010). The consumption of meat has been strongly related to the rise in affluence (The Guardian, 2009). Consumers are demanding meat products as a desirable dietary component of modern living. In the developing world red meat consumption doubled in the last 20 years (twice as fast as demand in developed countries), with total world demand for beef expected to double, again, in the next forty years (Bittman, 2008). Despite the associated environmental impacts of increased deforestation and carbon pollution, beef production will expand to satisfy increased global demand.

Discussion and Conclusion

This small selection of quotes from the Central Queensland study highlights how producers defend their current positions in relation to grazing practice. They are highly suspicious of city-based environmentalism and are not prepared to reconfigure their land management practices in accordance with environmental demands from the city. In spite of the groundswell of opinion outside farming and pastoralism that current practices of food and fibre production are unsustainable – and notwithstanding the many attempts to convince producers to adjust their management practices - change has been very slow. Landholders have stood firm in their opposition

to approaches that question existing practices, and have fought against accusations of 'environmental vandalism'.

While recognising landholders have experienced financial difficulties due to the vagaries of the global market place and their place as price takers and not price makers (Gray and Lawrence, 2001; Malcolm, Sale and Egan, 1996), culture also plays a significant part in determining the ways in which production is enacted. Producers' collective knowledge about cattle grazing and land management practices is generally unquestioned, actively endorsed and passed down through generations. Arguably, the traditional cultural practices of land management shared among graziers have potentially slowed the adaptation to some of the demands, emanating outside the agricultural industries, for a more environmentally-sustainable production regime. The problem is not unique to Australia. Shucksmith (1993) notes that despite the obsolescence of post-war productivist agriculture in Scotland, many landholders were unaware of the relevance of new agricultural policies and were unwilling to engage with these new post-productivist imperatives.

Productivist discourses recognise considerable merit in the agribusiness-driven, resource-intensive, mode of agriculture and pastoralism. This contains a clear set of values, beliefs, ideas and knowledge claims that are present and dominant in social texts and relate to the support for an, 'industrially driven, expansionist agriculture with state support based primarily on output and increased productivity' (Lowe, Murdoch, Marsden, Munton and Flynn, 1993: 221). These types of discourses have been identified as 'promethean' by Dryzek (1997) and 'technocratic' by McHenry (1996) and contain claims that humankind has an infinite capacity to control the resources of natural world (Dryzek, 1997: 45). They assume that technological progress is the key to future human (and agricultural) progress.

In this mode of thinking environmental problems are either denied (contested) or, if there existence is recognised, it is argued that they will be solved through the application of science and technology – for example, the introduction of bio-engineered plants and animals. For many, the productivist format for agriculture and pastoralism is not only the right way - it is the only way. Likewise, many environmentalists are certain that the clearing of native vegetation to increase the area of productive land is the wrong way. This form of objectivism and truth-making constitutes a very different social world to actors in each field.

At a time when productivism is being challenged 'from without' – by ecologists and urban-based voters who consider that the current trajectory of farming and grazing is unsustainable - there is considerable resistance and defence 'from within' by Central Queensland graziers. The latter reject the calls for changes to their management of grazing lands for a number of reasons. They believe: urban-based people do not understand the practices – and economic imperatives - of farming; current approaches to grazing are 'tried and true' and produce the best outcomes for the environment and for the Australian economy; graziers are already involved in 'best practice' on the farm – they are 'good farmers'; and, government policy on such things as tree clearing is an overreaction, fuelled by the political aims of uninformed 'greenies'. When ideas of productivism and elements of resistance combine as part of the habitus of rural producers, there exists a powerful cultural domain that reproduces a self-reinforcing view that they are misunderstood and must continue to uphold their own values and practices in the face of city-based opposition. Graziers might feel besieged, but the common features of their existence as rural producers, landowners, country dwellers, and as self-employed workers, places them in a different category and trajectory from that of urban citizens. It provides the structural

bases for continued cultural reproduction of productivist grazing ideals – whether or not those ideals are suited to farming in the 21stCentury.

What does this mean for Korean consumers of Australian beef? It means that while Australian beef is marketed on the basis of its clean and green credentials, the latter 'green' claim is called into question. That is, while it is certainly appropriate for Australia to claim that the meat is 'clean' (meaning free from BSE, Foot and Mouth Disease, hormones and chemicals, and is hygienically packed, formally inspected, and so forth) it is more difficult to argue that the meat is from a 'green' production system (that is, one that is environmentally sustainable). It seems we need a more holistic understanding of food, connecting what we eat with social and environmental impact. Further, we may ultimately need to question the very system and culture of carnivorous consumerism, which intensifies the mass production and mass consumption of beef.

This assists us to explain why the 'green' claims of Australian beef are a highly contested terrain with in Australia. Conservation groups and, indeed, government departments identifying an array of adverse environmental impacts associated with producing beef or domestic and export markets, have criticized the industry for its inability to embrace sustainability. However, change is not imminent: Australian producers are locked in the production patterns that keep them economically viable (in the short term at least) when competing on global markets. This political economy of beef production reinforces the status quo, and the status quo is one where short-term exploitation of the environment is sometimes necessary for longer-term economic survival.

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〈Appendix〉

Name (Pseudonym)	Age range	Sex (M/F)	Activity
Ces	60+	M	Retired Grazier
Leo	60+	M	Grazier
Athol	60+	M	Grazier/farmer
Ben	50-59	M	Grazier
Felicity	50-59	F	Grazier
Greg	50-59	M	Grazier
Max	50-59	M	Grazier/farmer
Lee	40-49	M	Grazier
Ted	60+	M	Grazier

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호주 퀸즈랜드 대학에서 박사학위를 받고, 같은 대학에서 박사후 연구원으로 재직 중이다. 관심분야는 식품체계 지속가능성, 식품과 환경, 식품 공급망에 있어서의 권력의 문제 등이다. 호주-뉴질랜드 농식품 연구네트워크의 회장이며, 세계농촌사회학회 호주 이사이다.

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호주 퀸즈랜드 대학 사회과학대 사회학과 교수로 재직 중이다. 호주 사회과학 학술원 회원이자 차기 세계농촌사회학회 회장이다. 농식품 재구조화, 세계화와 지역화, 농촌 및 지역 거버넌스, 자연 자원 관리의 사회적 측면 등에 대해 연구하고 있다. 최근 저서로는 Food Security, Nutrition and Sustainability(공저: 2010)가 있다.

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미국 코넬대학에서 발전사회학으로 박사학위를 받고, 현재 고려대 사회학과 교수로 재직 중이다. 연구 관심 분야는 농식품 사회학, 환경과 발전, 비교사회학 등이며, 최근에는 먹거리 정치와 육류 생산 및 소비에 관심을 가지고 있다. 논저로는 <새로운 농촌사회학>(공저: 2012), "한국 로컬푸드운동의 현황과 과제(2011)", "Teenage participants of the 2008 candlelight vigil"(2010) 등이 있다.